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To all my brothers and sisters in the St. Clare Fraternity,
May God fill you with His peace, His love, His joy and His grace!

I pray that you all had a most happy Christmas season and that God will bless all of you abundantly in the coming year. Saturday, January 10th was a very happy day for our Fraternity as we celebrated the profession of Bob Kowalski. We are all overjoyed that he is now a full-fledged member of our Fraternity. I wish to thank Jeanne Sachs and the other members of our election committee for their dedicated service. At our next meeting on Sunday, January 24th, they will present their slate. All of those who have agreed to be on the slate, we thank you. We would like to have at least two candidates for each position on the Council, so there will also be nominations from the floor. I hope all of you will be open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. A few months ago I had indicated to the Council that I intended to retire as Minister. My circumstances had changed and so, if nominated, I will not refuse. That, of course, is in God's hands and I will be equally happy either way.

At our next meeting we must complete the Demographic Survey and submit our Annual Fraternity Report to the Regional. Our "fair share" assessment to the Regional of \$55 for each professed member of our Fraternity is also due. All of our professed members who can do so are urged to make this contribution in a separated donation, apart from their usual monthly contribution. For those suffering any financial hardship, the fraternity will most willing pay for them. In this regard, total confidentiality will be observed.

We encourage all you can to participate in the Regional Conference in late April,, the Quinquennial in late June, the NAFRA Conference in early November and the Regionally sponsored Pilgrimage to Assisi in October of 2017. Any one of those experiences will greatly enhance your appreciation and understanding of your vocation as a Secular Franciscan.

Let us storm heaven with prayers for vocations to the Secular Franciscan, for peace in the Holy Land and the Middle East, for God's blessings on Pope Francis during this holy year of Mercy, for a revitalization of faith in our country, for an end to the culture of death and for the protection of our religious liberties. We ask all of this through the intercession of Our Spiritual Mother Mary, who is also our Advocate, our Mediatrix and our Co-Redemptrix
Your brother and servant in Christ,
Bill Roché, OFS, Minister, St. Clare Fraternity

If you have an announcement, an article, a suggestion, a picture, a poem, etc. that you would like to have included in our Clarion, please send it by email for consideration to the Editor before the 10th of each month.



The Clarion Newsletter of St. Clare Fraternity, OFS

Meeting every 4th Sunday @ 12:30 PM

St. William's Ministry Center

Naples, Florida

January 18th Issue #140

Franciscan Saints & Feasts

Jan. 18th – Feb. 24th

Upcoming Birthdays

Jan. 20 - George Chami

Feb. 6 - Michael Stuart

Anniversary of Profession

Jan. 24 - Jeanne Sachs 2010

Jan. 25 - George Chami 2004

Feb. 2 - Christine Pekar 2013

Franciscan Saints & Feasts we celebrate during this period-

January 30 - Hyacinth of Mariscotti, Virgin, 3rd Order

February 2 - Presentation of the Lord

February 6 - Peter Baptist, Paul Miki et al, Martyrs, 1st, 3rd Order

February 10 - Ash Wednesday

February 11 - Our Lady of Lourdes

February 19 - Conrad of Piacenza, Hermit, 3rd Order

Reminders

Sun., Feb. 28 - Elections as part of our Fraternity Meeting

Sun., March 27 - Our Monthly Fraternity Meeting

Fri., April 29 - Sun., May 1: Regional Conference at San Pedro

Thurs., June 30 - Mon. July : XIX Quinquennial Conference

Tues., Nov. 1- Sun., Nov. 6: NAFRA Conference at San Pedro

Tues., Oct. 23 - Regionally sponsored 10 day trip to Assisi/Rome

Finding Solitude -Reflections from Henri Nouwen - 1/18/16

All human beings are alone. No other person will completely feel like we do, think like we do, act like we do. Each of us is unique, and our aloneness is the other side of our uniqueness. The question is whether we let our aloneness become loneliness or whether we allow it to lead us into solitude. Loneliness is painful; solitude is peaceful. Loneliness makes us cling to others in desperation; solitude allows us to respect others in their uniqueness and create community. Letting our aloneness grow into solitude and not into loneliness is a lifelong struggle. It requires conscious choices about whom to be with, what to study, how to pray, and when to ask for counsel. But wise choices will help us to find the solitude where our hearts can grow in love.

Vatican - Concerning Pope Francis' new book

In the new book, titled *The Name of God is Mercy* and to be released Tuesday, the pope states: "Jesus goes and heals and integrates the marginalized, the ones who are outside the city, the ones outside the encampment. In so doing, he shows us the way." Reflecting on Jesus' healing of lepers -- who were forbidden to be visited or touched under Mosaic law for fear of causing contamination to the rest of the community -- the pontiff says the Gospels show there are two types of logic of thought and faith. On the one hand, there is the fear of losing the just and saved, the sheep that are already safely inside the pen," says Francis. "On the other hand, there is the desire to save the sinners, the lost, those on the other side of the fence." "The first is the logic of the scholars of the law," says the pope, using a term he frequently references in homilies to speak of those who emphasize strict adherence to church teaching over the practice of mercy. "The second is the logic of God, who welcomes, embraces, and transfigures evil into good, transforming and redeeming my sin, transmuting condemnation into salvation," he continues. "Jesus enters into contact with the leper," says Francis. "He touches him. In so doing, he teaches us what to do, which logic to follow, when faced with people who suffer physically and spiritually."

The new book is the result of an interview between the pope and Andrea Tornielli, an Italian journalist and the coordinator for the Vatican Insider news website. The book was published in 86 countries and in 20 languages on Tuesday, January 12. The book contains an extensive conversation Tornielli had with Francis in July 2015, just after the pope's visit that month to Ecuador, Bolivia, and Paraguay and before he presided over the contentious worldwide meeting of Catholic prelates known as a Synod of Bishops in October. Tornielli states in the forward that he wanted to ask the pope questions on the themes of mercy and forgiveness "to analyze what those words mean to him, as a man and a priest" in the context of the Jubilee year of mercy Francis opened Dec. 8.

Throughout the 99 pages of the interview -- broken into nine interconnected parts in the book -- the pontiff speaks expansively about how he understands mercy and what it means to him personally and to the wider church. He also responds at several points to those who say he has focused too much on mercy, and offers a clear vision for how the church should act in the future. He frequently bases his thoughts on the parables offered by Jesus, even saying once: "We must go back to the Gospel."

Francis also offers a number of personal anecdotes from his priestly work and notably quotes four times from homilies and writings by Albino Luciani, the man who served as Pope John Paul I for only 33 days before his sudden death on Sept. 28, 1978.

Outlining what the church should be doing today, Francis states plainly: "We need to enter the darkness, the night in which so many of our brothers live. We need to be able to make contact with them and let them feel our closeness, without letting ourselves be wrapped up in that darkness and influenced by it." "Caring for outcasts and sinners does not mean letting the wolves attack the flock," says the pontiff. "It means trying to reach everyone by sharing the experience of mercy, which we ourselves have experienced, without ever caving in to the temptation of feeling that we are just or perfect."

Prayer from St. Ignatius Loyola

Lord, teach me to be generous.

Teach me to serve you as you deserve;

to give and not to count the cost,

to fight and not to heed the wounds,

to toil and not to seek for rest,

to labor and not to ask for reward,

save that of knowing that I do your will.

Reflection for Richard Rohr on June 1, 2015 entitled "Christ, the Personal Template of all Creation"

Bonaventure said very simply: "Unless we are able to view things in terms of how they originate, how they are to return to their end, and how God shines forth in them, we will not be able to understand." For Bonaventure, the perfection of God and God's creation is quite simply a full circle, and to be perfect the circle must and will complete itself. He knows that Alpha and Omega are finally the same, and the lynchpin holding it all in unity is the "Christ Mystery," or the essential unity of matter and spirit, humanity and divinity. The Christ Mystery is thus the template for all creation, and even more precisely the crucified Christ, who reveals *the necessary cycle of loss and renewal* that keeps all things moving toward ever further life. Now we know that the death and birth of every star and every atom is this same pattern of loss and renewal, yet this pattern is invariably hidden or denied, and therefore must be revealed by God--through "the cross."

Bonaventure's theology is never about trying to placate a distant or angry God, earn forgiveness, or find some abstract theory of justification. He is all cosmic optimism and hope! Once it lost this kind of mysticism, Christianity became preoccupied with fear, unworthiness, and guilt much more than being included in--and delighting in--an all-pervasive plan that is already in place. As Paul's school taught, "Before the world was made, God chose us in Christ" (Ephesians 1:4). The problem is solved from the beginning. Bonaventure could have helped us move beyond the negative notion of history being a "fall from grace." He invited us into a positive notion of history as a slow but real emergence/evolution into ever-greater consciousness of a larger and always renewed life ("resurrection")--with the always necessary and resented push-back called loss, suffering, or "the cross." When we talk about incarnation, what we're really talking about is who we are: daughters and sons of God, inspirited flesh, and even "temples of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19). The final direction is thus inevitable.

From *Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi*, pp. 162-164

Death, a New Birth - Henry Nouwen

There comes a time in all our lives when we must prepare for death. When we become old, get seriously ill, or are in great danger, we can't be preoccupied simply with the question of how to get better unless "getting better" means moving on to a life beyond our death. In our culture, which in so many ways is death oriented, we find little if any creative support for preparing ourselves for a good death. Most people presume that our only desire is to live longer on this earth. Still, dying, like giving birth, is a way to new life, and as Ecclesiastes says: "There is a season for everything: ... a time for giving birth, a time for dying" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2).

We have to prepare ourselves for our death with the same care and attention as our parents prepared themselves for our births.

Reflection from Ronald Rohlheiser - "Your sins are forgiven"

As we enter into ordinary time, we breathe in the crisp winter air, we exhale the whirlwind of the holiday season, and we attempt to keep those resolutions we made just a few short weeks ago as we marked the beginning of a new year. However, we find ourselves living in a world that is anything but ordinary. In the news, we hear almost daily that we are living in a world wrought with terrorism, violence, greed, and abuses. But in light of this, we are also living in a world that needs mercy and forgiveness more than ever.

How can I live out my faith and forgive others who have wronged me? How can I seek forgiveness from those whom I have wronged? And, perhaps most importantly, how can I reach out to the Lord and pray that I can find it deep within to forgive myself, gratefully accepting the good news that our merciful Lord has already forgiven my transgressions?

Pray that God will bless and control our upcoming election